

TRIBUTE TO SARAH MAE
FLEMMING BROWN

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and honor that I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the late Sarah Mae Flemming Brown for her valiant contributions to the cause of civil and human rights. Her place in history has not been fully recognized, but her determination to seek equity and fair treatment in our society deserves to be illuminated.

Ms. Flemming is an unsung hero whose pioneering quest to end segregation and racial hatred isn't told in our classrooms the way that so many other triumphant sagas are recounted, and in fact she didn't even tell the story to her children. But I want to recount her heroic stand, so it can from this point forward be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

On June 22, 1954, the 20-year old maid boarded a bus in much the same manner that Rosa Parks later did. She took the only empty seat, one she believed began the rows in which black riders were allowed to sit. The driver challenged her, and humiliated, she signaled to get off at the next stop. The bus driver blocked her attempt to exit through the front of the bus and punched her in the stomach as he ordered her out the rear door. She wasn't trying to prove a point, and certainly there was no way of knowing how her apparently simple gesture of defiance would lead to monumental changes in our Nation's fundamental values.

Civil rights activists in Columbia, SC, heard of Ms. Flemming's ordeal and through Ms. Mojeska Simpkins enlisted Attorney Phillip Wittenberg, a white attorney in Columbia to represent her. *Flemming v. South Carolina Electric and Gas* was filed on July 21, 1954 in U.S. District Court. The allegation was that Ms. Flemming's 14th amendment right to equal protection had been violated.

On February 16, 1955, Federal District Judge George Bell Timmerman, Sr. dismissed the case. Ms. Flemming appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and her case was argued on June 21, 1955. The Fourth Circuit reversed Judge Timmerman on July 14, 1955 and "remanded the case for further proceedings." SCE&G appealed the decision of the Appeals Court. On April 23, 1956, the United States Supreme Court dismissed SCE&G's appeal, and on June 13, 1956, Judge Timmerman dismissed the case once again.

Throughout this entire ordeal Ms. Flemming and Attorney Wittenberg endured intimidation and cross-burnings from the KKK. Things took their toll on Mr. Wittenberg and he decided not to handle a second appeal. Attorneys Matthew Perry and Lincoln Jenkins became the new lawyers of record for Ms. Flemming, and with their help and the help of NAACP lawyers the Fourth Circuit once again remanded the case to the trial court.

While Ms. Flemming was fighting her battle in Columbia, SC, things began fermenting in other parts of the South. On December 1, 1955, a now famous seamstress, Rosa Parks, boarded a city bus in Montgomery, AL, in much the same fashion as Sarah Flemming did on June 22, 1954, some 18 months before. Few people are aware of Ms. Flemming's

story. Timing and significant forces combined to keep her story from common knowledge.

Judge George Bell Timmerman, Sr.'s son, George Bell Timmerman, Jr.—an avowed segregationist—was elected Governor of South Carolina in November 1954, and conspired with the local newspaper, the State, to black out, or it might be more appropriate to say, white out civil rights activities taking place in South Carolina. Consequently, history records that the United States Supreme Court case involving Rosa Parks decided on November 13, 1956 desegregated public transportation, although the Court had made clear in its remand of Ms. Flemming's case five months earlier, what the law of the land was.

Ms. Flemming went on to marry John Brown of Gaston County, N.C., and they had three children. She poured her heart and soul into Goodwill Baptist Church in Eastover, SC, and occasionally continued to work as a housekeeper. A heart attack brought on by diabetes took Mrs. Sarah Mae Flemming Brown just before her 60th birthday in 1993, a few months after I became the first African-American elected to this august body. Her death ended a seemingly simple life that had an extraordinary impact on this country.

The story of Ms. Flemming reminds us of the social progress that has been made in one generation and the progress that continues to be made as a testament to the vision and courage of such an advocate of American freedom and equality. Her legal team, that fought with her all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, should also be commended for their insight and vision that would help lead to so many future legal triumphs toward ending government-imposed segregation. Ms. Flemming Brown's heroic actions should remind them and us that "if a tree were to fall in a wood and nobody's there to hear it, does not mean it does not make a sound."

I invite my colleagues to join me today in thanking Sarah Flemming Brown for providing the precedent that led to the desegregation of public transportation in these United States. We should also appreciate the great loyalty she and her family and friends have kept to South Carolina. I am humbled to share her story today for all to appreciate.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes in the House on Tuesday, September 20th, due to a previous and unavoidable commitment. Therefore, I was unable to vote on H.R. 3761, the Flexibility for Displaced Workers Act (rollcall No. 476), and H. Res. 441, a resolution to congratulate the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Discovery crew (rollcall No. 477). Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on both of these measures considered by the House.

TRIBUTE TO HIS HOLINESS
ARAM I

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to join my Armenian American constituents of California's 27th Congressional District in welcoming His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia to the State of California.

His Holiness Aram I was elected Catholicos on June 28, 1995. Four years earlier, His Holiness had been selected to serve as the Moderator for the World Council of Churches (WCC). This prominent ecumenical organization is composed of more than 340 churches from around the world and represents over 400 million Christians. His Holiness is the first Orthodox Christian and the youngest person to be elevated to the post of Moderator of the WCC.

Aram I was ordained a priest in 1968 and obtained the title of Vartabed (Doctor of the Armenian Church) in 1970. In 1979 he was elected Primate of the Armenian Orthodox community in Lebanon. The next year he received his Episcopal ordination. His tenure as Primate of the Armenian community in Lebanon coincided with the Lebanese Civil War. During this time and after, His Holiness reorganized parishes and schools, restructured and reactivated church-related institutions, and renewed community leadership.

As a strong supporter of inter-religious relations, dialogue and cooperation, Aram I has played a significant part in promoting common values, mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among religions. He has worked tirelessly as Primate to foster tolerance and build mutual confidence between Christian and Muslim communities.

His Holiness is also active as a scholar and has written several books in which he frequently admonishes the vital importance of dialogue and collaboration among the living faiths of the world.

We can expect a message of peace and unity when His Holiness addresses the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on October 14th, 2005. His Holiness will also present the main address at a symposium to be held at the University of Southern California that will focus on how Christians respond to violence. I am honored that the Catholicos will be visiting the 27th District on October 7th to preside over church services to be held at Holy Martyrs Armenian Apostolic Church in Encino, California.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the His Holiness Aram I, a man who has been a strong voice for mutual understanding among religions, cultures and civilizations; a true spiritual leader committed to peace, justice, and human rights.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SIMON
WIESENTHAL

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 21, 2005

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay respects to and celebrate the life of Simon